



# **Preventing pharmacy robberies and burglaries**

A safety and compliance  
presentation for Alberta pharmacies

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# **Presenter/speaker personal disclosure**

**Presenter's name:** James Krempien

I have no current or past relationships with commercial entities.

**Speaking fees for current program:**

I have received no speaker's fee for this learning activity.



# Presentation objectives

Creating safer environments for pharmacy teams and Albertans.

1. Examine the historical factors contributing to pharmacy robbery/burglary increases.
2. Understand ACP standards for drug storage.
3. Direct to resources and best practices.



# Land acknowledgement

The Alberta College of Pharmacy respectfully acknowledges that we are gathered on **Treaty 7** territory, the traditional lands of First Nations people, and Métis **Region 3**. The roots of many modern medications come from the Indigenous peoples' traditional use of plants from these lands.



## Historical context

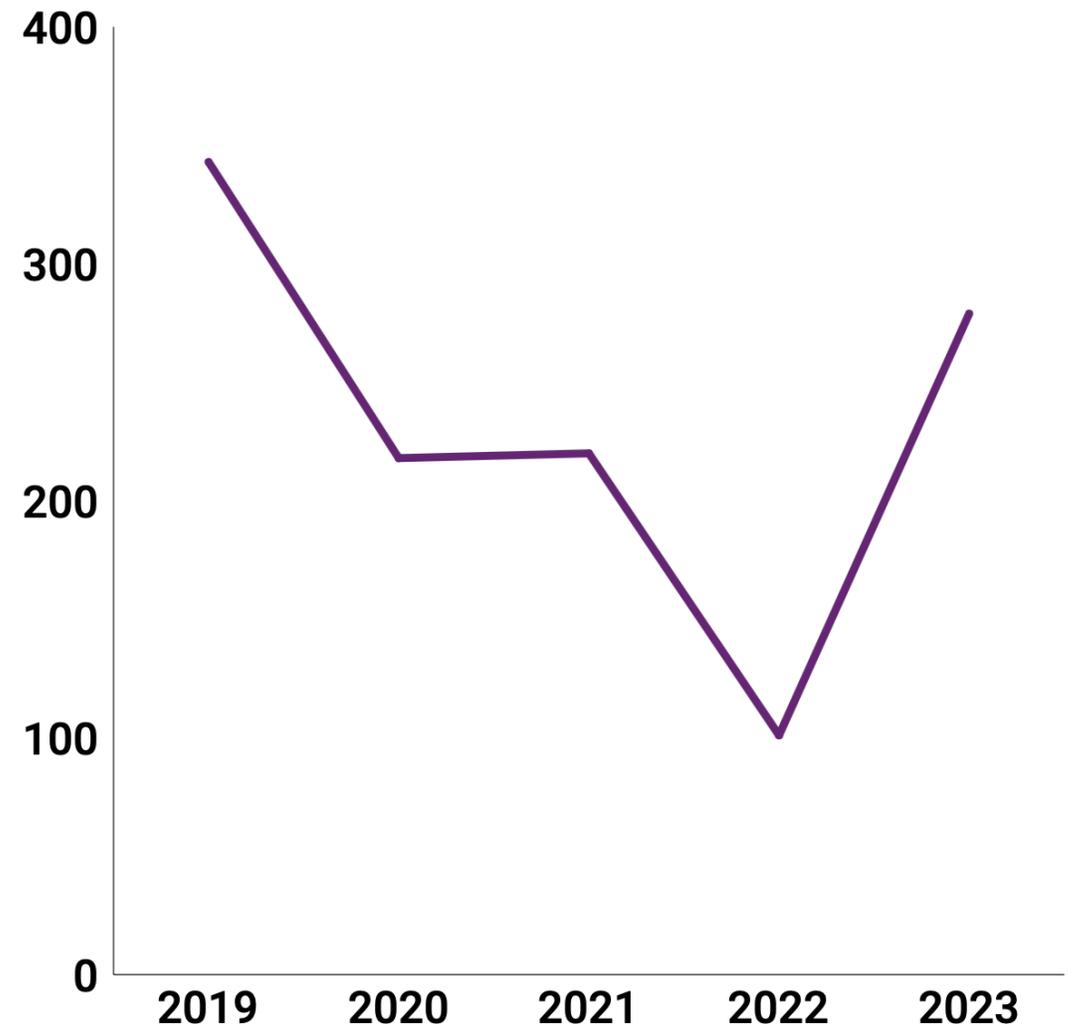
- In 2010, Alberta experienced an increase in pharmacy robberies
- Largely the actions of a small number of individuals supporting personal substance abuse
- Resolved through police enforcement, formulation change in some commercial oxycodone drugs, and rise of illegal fentanyl



## Historical context

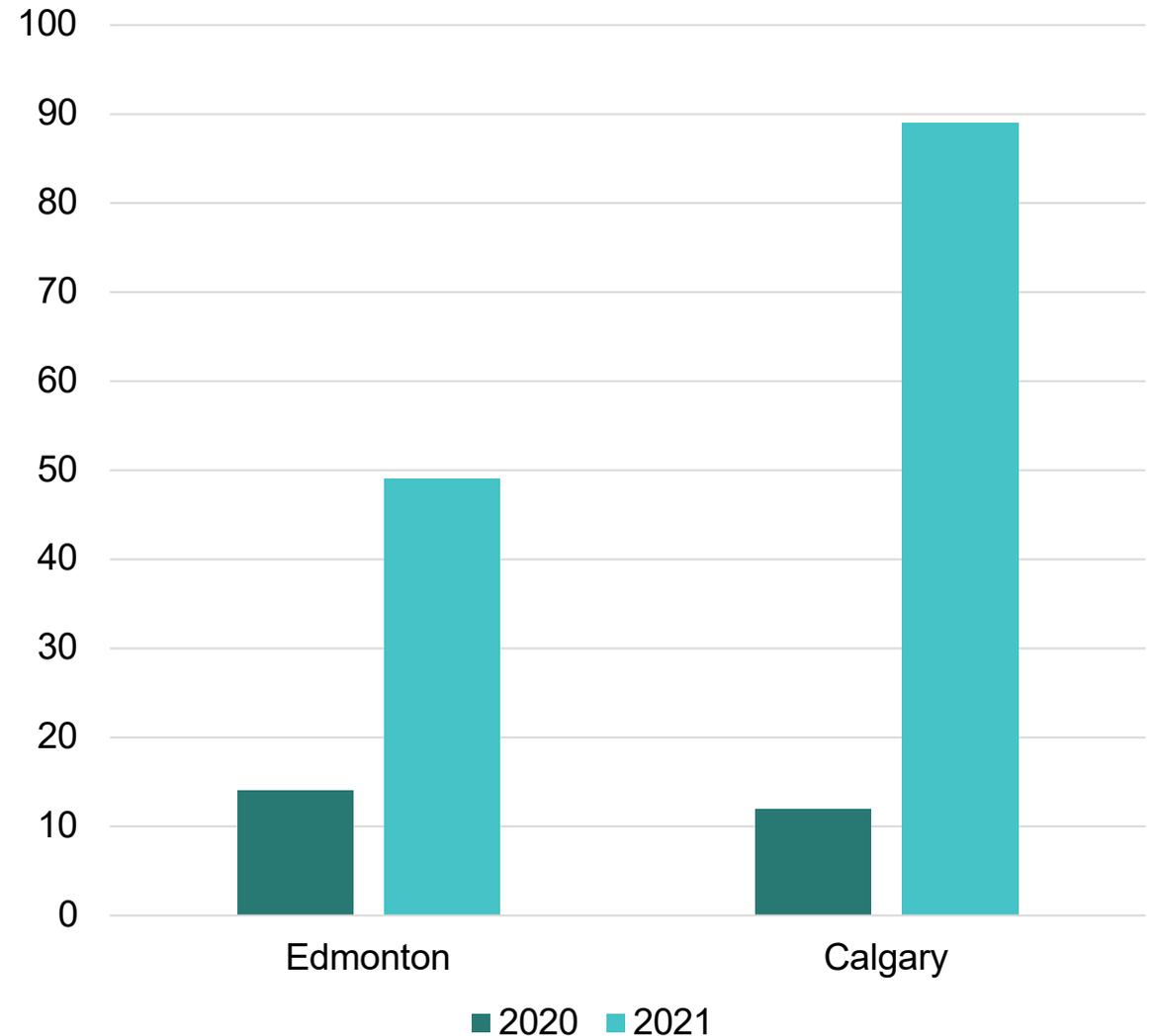
- In 2018, robberies were down but forgeries began to rise
- Primarily related to codeine-based cough syrups
- Part of a large-scale effort by organized crime
- In 2020, TPP Alberta reclassified codeine-based oral liquids as Type 1 and forgeries fell

## Forgeries reported to ACP



## Historical context

- Beginning in 2019, significant rise in pharmacy crimes in Alberta
- Robberies jumped 250% in Edmonton and 640% in Calgary from 2020 to 2021
- 68% of all robberies reported to Health Canada in 2021 were in Alberta



# Factors behind the increase

- Shortages fueled black market demand
- Policy changes limited prescription forgeries
- Criminal organizations turned to direct theft to access these drugs
- Newer oxycodone formulations designed to prevent misuse were circumvented



## Impact on pharmacies

- Trauma and safety risks to staff and patients
- Threats of violence and damage to property
- Other costs
  - Time off
  - Stock loss
  - Insurance claims



## ACP standards

- As of July 1, 2022, time-delayed safes are required for at-risk drugs – Standards for the Operations of Licensed Pharmacies 3.3.2(d) & 4.41(a)
- Applies to all Alberta pharmacies except exempt categories



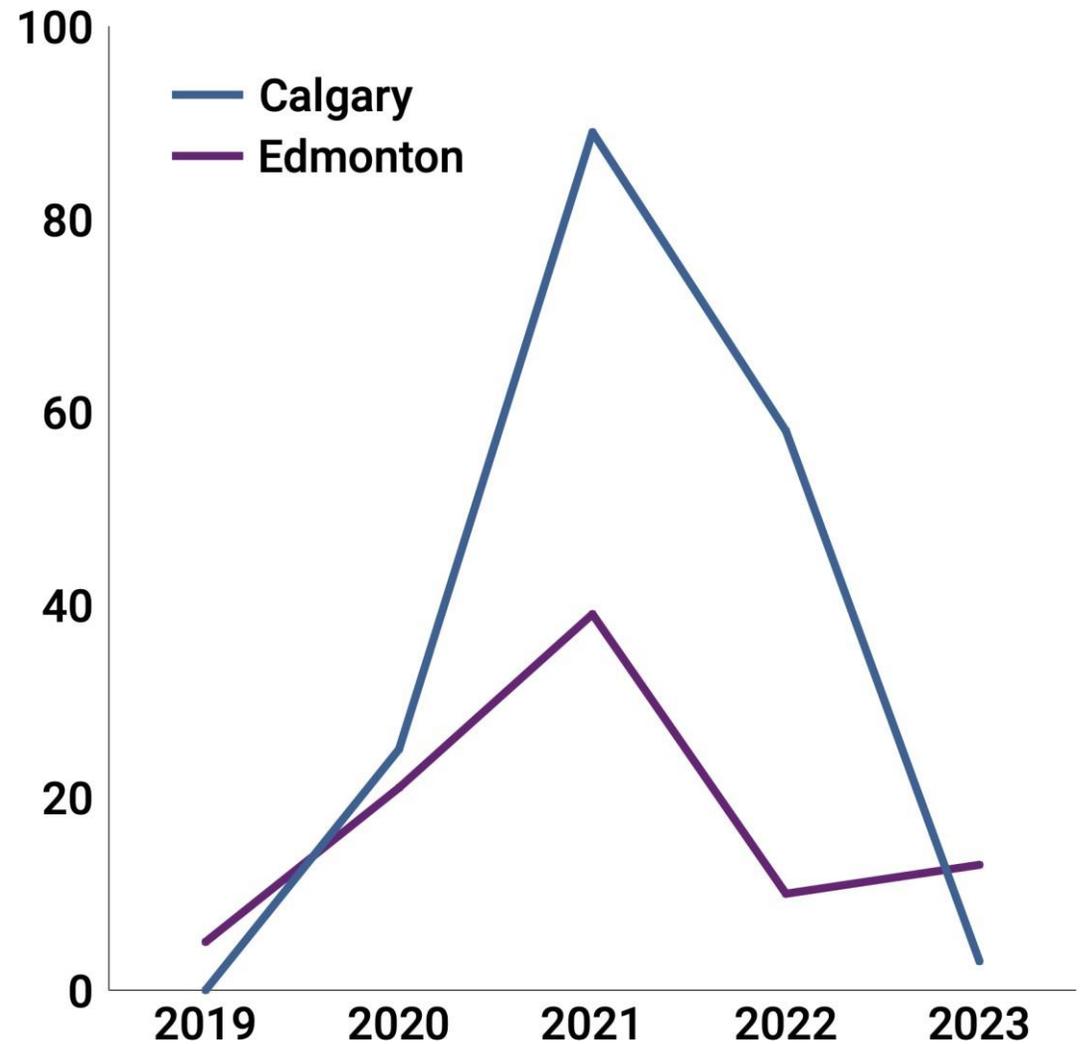
## Time-delayed safes explained

- Metal safe secured in place
- Must delay access for a minimum of 5 minutes
  - ACP recommends 7-10 minutes depending on location
- Signage indicating the safe is present is mandatory



## Positive impact of the standards

- Major reduction in robberies after implementation
  - Similar measures in BC reduced drug-related robberies to near zero
- Police confirm time-delay safes deter criminals when used properly



## Best practices – security

- Ask the experts
- Install and maintain security cameras
- Display visible deterrent signage
- Install alarms and panic buttons
- Install physical security measures
- Avoid working alone whenever possible



## Best practices – safes

- Store at risk drugs in the safe and limit quantities
- Lock safes at all times except when dispensing or restocking
- Limit access to keys/combinations



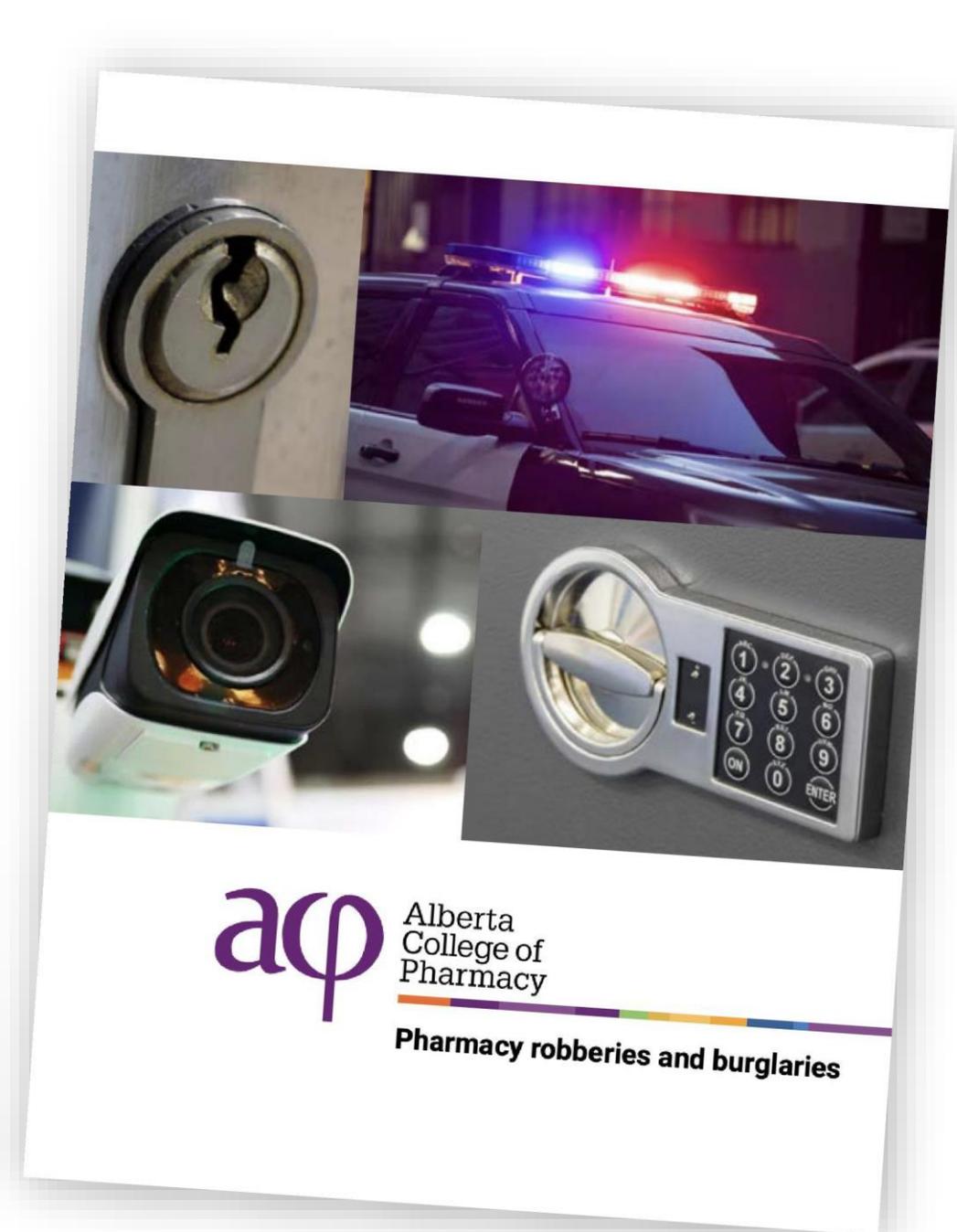
# Reporting procedures

- Report to police immediately after an incident
- Secure the crime scene and collect witness statements
- Report the event to ACP via the form on the website
- Submit a Loss or Theft Report to Health Canada if controlled substances are involved



## ACP resources

- Comprehensive guide to robberies and burglaries, in addition to Link articles
  - Physical security
  - Alarm systems
  - Policies and procedures
- Details and contacts for reporting procedures



## **Additional support**

- EPS Storewatch Program
- CPS Victim Assistance
- RCMP community support
- Government of Alberta resources for victims of crime





**Questions?**